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## about



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**a-bout** [ə bōwt] CORE MEANING: a grammatical word that refers to different sides or aspects of something from some point of orientation • (prep) a book about a dog • (adv) There's a lot of laziness about.

1. *preposition*

in connection with: in connection with or relating to • *think about problems*

2. *preposition*

approximately: close to in number, time, or degree • *inviting about 15 people*

3. *preposition*

doing or attending to: with or in an activity • *go about your business*

4. *preposition*

close by: placed, located, or happening close by or around • *frantic activity going on all about us*

5. *preposition*

around: around or on a place or person • *a red scarf about her neck*

6. *adverb preposition*

in various places: positioned here and there • *scattered about the house*

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- *scattered about the house*

**7. adverb preposition**

**in different directions:** from place to place in different directions or in no particular direction • *children running about everywhere*

**8. adverb**

**in circulation:** available or in circulation  
• *there was never much money about*

**9. adverb**

**into a reversed position:** in or to the opposite direction • *the wrong way about*

**10. adverb**

**all around:** on every side of or all the way around "He proceeded to the banks of the Hudson, and looked about among the vessels." Jules Verne *Around the World in 80 Days* (1873)

**11. adverb**

**used as intensifier:** used to emphasize a statement, usually when expressing impatience or anger (*informal*) • *Well, it's about time you showed up!*

**12. adverb**

**NAUTICAL to opposite tack:** on or to the opposite tack

[Old English *onbūtan* "on or around the outside of," from *on* (see on) + *būtan* (see but)]

**be about to be on the point of doing something** • *The game was about to start.*

**be what something or somebody is (all) about to be what something or somebody involves or has as a purpose** (*informal*)

**not about to** used to emphasize that somebody is certainly not going to do something (*informal*) • *I'm not about to apologize!*

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un-abridged *an-ə-ˈbrīdʒd*  
adj : being the most complete  
in its class

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is just the  
beginning.

Pa  
Introduc  
to Word

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about[1,adverb]  
about[2,preposition]  
about[3,adjective]



Main Entry: **1** about 4)  
Pronunciation: 6 - 'bawt  
Function: *adverb*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English *abutan*, from *1*a- +  
butan outside -- more at BUT

Date: before 12th century

**1** a : reasonably close to <*about* a year ago> **b** : ALMOST <*about*  
starved> **c** : on the verge of -- usually used with *be* and a following  
infinitive <*is about* to join the army> -- used with a negative to  
express intention or determination <*not about* to quit>

**2** : on all sides : AROUND

**3** a : in rotation **b** : around the outside

**4** : HERE AND THERE

**5** : in the vicinity : NEAR

**6** : in succession : ALTERNATELY <*turn about* is fair play>

**7** : in the opposite direction <*face about*> <*the other way about*>

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### Pronunciation Symbols

ʌ as a and u in about  
ɪ as e in kitten  
ʊ as ur/er in further  
ʌ as a in ash  
ʌ as a in ace  
ʌ as o in mop  
aʊ as ou in out  
tʃ as ch in chin

ɛ as e in bet  
eɪ as ea in easy  
g as g in go  
ɪ as i in hit  
ɪ as i in ice  
j as j in job  
ŋ as ng in sing  
o as o in go

ɔ as aw in law  
ɔɪ as oy in boy  
θ as th in thin  
θ as th in the  
ʊ as oo in loot  
ʊ as oo in foot  
j as y in yet  
zɪ as si in vision

For more information see the [Guide To Pronunciation](#).

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